



## Fate of DACA now up to Congress

Susan Redden

September 15, 2017

Recipients of the DACA, which stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, program might breathe a sigh of relief after an announcement earlier this week that President Donald Trump had reached agreement with Democratic leaders on a plan that would allow the young immigrants to stay in the U.S.

After a dinner with the president, Senate minority leader Chuck Shumer and House minority leader Nancy Pelosi said the three had “agreed to enshrine the protections of DACA into law quickly” and that they would back legislation bolstering border security.

But forecasting victory would be premature since any final legislation has to get support from Republican majorities in the House and Senate, including those who are DACA opponents.

Trump, via a Tweet after the dinner, said there was no deal on DACA, that any plan would be subject to a vote and “massive border security would have to be agreed to in exchange for (his) consent.”

Later, came two more Tweets: “Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military? They have been in our country for many years through no fault of their own — brought in by parents at a young age. Plus BIG border security.”

Trump initially announced his administration was rescinding the program and gave Congress six months to pass legislation preserving it. During the presidential campaign, he criticized the program designed to allow young immigrants brought to the country as children to remain in the U.S.

DACA allows those in the program to lawfully work in the U.S. and gives them protection from deportation. Through June 2016, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services granted DACA protections to nearly 800,000 individuals.

The number of young immigrants brought to the U.S. as children is estimated at 2 million. Those in the program have applied, undergone background checks and paid \$495 in fees each two years, enabling them to seek jobs, get driver’s licenses and open bank accounts. To be eligible, they must be in school, have graduated or received a high school equivalency degree, been honorably discharged from the U.S military or Coast Guard, and be without felony convictions, significant misdemeanor convictions, or three or more misdemeanor convictions of any kind.

More than 640,000 of DACA recipients are currently employed and proponents argue their work expands the payroll tax base and increases Social Security and Medicare contributions. They say

ending the program would reduce Social Security and Medicare contributions by \$24.6 billion over a decade.

Opponents argue the program hurts Americans who would have the jobs now held by DACA recipients.

The CATO Institute and the Center for American Progress — on opposite sides of the political fence — agree that ending DACA and deporting those recipients would shrink the U.S. economy.

CATO studies find those in the program to be better educated and employed in higher paying jobs than other immigrants. It estimated deporting DACA recipients would cost \$60 billion and result in a \$280 billion reduction in economic growth over the next decade.

### Town Hall Meeting

Controversies surrounding some statues and other symbols of history will be the focus of Southwest Missouri Democrats' town hall meeting on Wednesday.

Barry Brown, a professor of philosophy at Missouri Southern State University, has been invited to lead discussions on how to deal with opposing claims on the removal of statues, flags and other memorabilia that some may find offensive, while others see as historic symbols. The meeting is set for 7 p.m. at the Laborers' Hall, 2001 Empire Ave. in Joplin.

The Democratic group on Friday issued a statement urging nonviolence in the wake of a decision in which a former St. Louis police officer was acquitted of first-degree murder charges filed in the 2011 death of a black man fatally shot after a high-speed chase.

The statement cited the importance of nonviolent protest as a way to bring issues to the forefront, and said Southwest Missouri Democrats join with the Missouri Democratic Party "in full commitment to building communities that recognize that black lives matter."